



BINGO GAME USING A LIMITED NUMBER OF DESIGNATIONS

Cross-Reference to Related Application:

- (001) This application claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application no. 60/418,379 filed on October 16th, 2002 and entitled METHOD OF GENERATING BINGO-TYPE OUTCOMES. The whole content of said application is herein incorporated into the present application by this reference.

Field of the Invention:

- (002) The invention relates to a method of playing a bingo game.

Background of the Invention:

- (003) Bingo games are well known. They involve the playing of a card by a group of players, with the players daubing card areas as corresponding balls are drawn from a blower. When a player matches a winning pattern with his daubing and claims it, he is designated the winner.
- (004) Bingo games are also played on electronic gaming apparatuses. This format usually involves that the draw of designations is limited to a single player. During the draw of a predetermined number of designations, the apparatus automatically daubs the card(s) and evaluates at the end the winning patterns the cards may bear.
- (005) The format used for the designations on the cards and for the draw are usually numbers; seventy-five (75) with forty (40) to over fifty (50) of them drawn for the latter, and seventy-five (75) with twenty-four (24) or twenty-five (25) borne number per card. Accordingly, a good part of the drawn numbers does not participate in the game but is drawn in vain.
- (006) Another well-known bingo is the very popular version played in the Latino-American countries. This bingo is played in its electronic version as follows. The player buys a participation in the game. He receives four bingo cards; each of which bears fifteen (15) designations with no duplicate designations. The apparatus builds a population of designations composed only of the card borne designations. A predetermined number of

designations are drawn, the cards are daubed accordingly, and an evaluation of the cards is completed. On the basis of said evaluation, the player is awarded a prize.

- (007) Knowing the state of the art, the inventor believes that there is a need for improvement in the field of the invention.

Objects of the Invention:

- (008) Accordingly, providing a faster bingo game is an object of the invention.
- (009) Another object is to provide a game with non-stop action, independently of the designation drawn.
- (0010) Another object is to provide a game where an animation is also always provided when a draw of a new designation is completed.
- (0011) Another object is to offer a game where players can find more easily the areas on the cards they have to daub.
- (0012) In consequence of the above objects, the ultimate object of the invention is to provide players with a game offering an increased incentive, and therefore to encourage the players to play for longer periods.

Summary of the Invention:

- (0013) To fulfill the objects listed above, the invention consists in a wagering game of the same kind as a bingo game and characterized by the use of a set of game indicia (bingo balls) bearing the same designations as the area designations the game card(s) bear(s). Furthermore, no additional game indicium bearing designations not borne by the game card is included in the set of game indicia.
- (0014) Furthermore, the invention consists in a method of playing said game wherein at least one player places a bet. Upon reception of said bet, the player is provided with at least one game

card bearing area designations. Designations are drawn according to the rules of the game. Card areas are daubed based on a match between the drawn designation and a card designation. During the play, according to game rules, the card is evaluated to determine whether it fulfills a winning criterion, with a prize being awarded in the case of a positive evaluation.

Brief Description of the Drawings:

- (0015) These as well as other aspects and advantages of the present invention will become easier to understand in light of the following detailed description of preferred embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:
- (0016) Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the prior art;
- (0017) Figure 2 is a schematic representation of a game card and the associated set of designations; while
- (0018) Figure 3 is a schematic representation of another card with duplicate designations in association with the designations used for the determination of the game outcome.

Preferred Embodiment:

- (0019) Referring to figure 1, the usual components of a bingo game consist in a bingo card 10 divided in twenty-five (25) areas, in a five by five (5x5) matrix format. On top of each column is a letter 12 (B, I, N, G, and O). Each area of the card bears a designation 14, except for the one in the center corresponding to a free area 16 that is automatically daubed at the beginning of the game. On the other hand, there are seventy-five (75) balls 18 bearing designations with numbers varying from one (1) to seventy-five (75) and associated with one of the stated letters. When a ball is drawn, the player can refer to the letter to find the column for a faster daubing.
- (0020) In comparison, the invention, as illustrated on figure 2, is composed of a game card 20 bearing designations 22 varying from A to Y and a set of balls 24 bearing the same designations. As can be seen, no ball or card area bears designations not represented by the other element of the game. Accordingly, no draw is completed in vain.

- (0021) A realization of the invention consists in a game played on an electronic gaming apparatus. This apparatus includes a credit-related means to receive credits or credit information from the player, to monitor these credits as the player places bets and is awarded prizes, and to redeem the player's credits these credits when needed. The apparatus also includes a display, player input means allowing the player to command the apparatus, and a computing means monitoring information provided by the above-listed means, controlling the display, and generating the game outcome.
- (0022) To play the game, the player inserts credits and places a bet, which can also be referred to as buying a card. A card is displayed to the player or he selects a card among a series of available ones. Then, he actuates the START command. Upon reception of the START command, the computing means randomly selects designations to show on the apparatus display. These designations are randomly selected among the designation population that includes only the designations displayed on the game card areas. Accordingly, each time a designation is drawn from the set of designations and shown on the apparatus display, the player has at least one area with a corresponding area designation on his card. The player, or the apparatus (if it automatically completes the process), daubs (or marks in a convenient way) at least one card area each time a designation is drawn until the last designation is drawn. When all designations are drawn, an evaluation of the card is completed.
- (0023) Accordingly, the advantage provided by having the same volume of designations for the designation set as the number of card-borne designations is, as stated above, to increase the speed of the game; all of the drawn designations participate in the daubing of the card. Furthermore, on an electronic gaming apparatus, an animation of daubing at least one card area is done each time a designation is drawn.
- (0024) Furthermore, this modified process ensures that the player gets a card with an important number of daubed spots at the end of the process. In a typical process with seventy-five (75) designations and cards with twenty-four (24) designations, it is not unusual for players to reach the end of the game with only a few daubed spots while the top prize demands all of the card areas to be daubed.

- (0025) A typical alternative is to allow duplicate designations, either in the set of designations or on the game cards. Figure 3 illustrates that alternative with some designations in both sets (card designations and ball designations) being duplicated 26 and 28. In consequence of that alternative, the game is modified by the draw of designations resulting in the daubing of a plurality of card areas or a designation draw resulting in a card designation not being daubed when the same designation is drawn a second time.
- (0026) Another alternative to the above method is to provide an electronic bingo game that may be played in a multiple-step way if the player deems it desirable. A typical example of this method is to draw a first predetermined number of designations. A daubing of the card is completed and the card is evaluated. If the card fulfills a winning criterion, the player is awarded a prize. However, if the card marking does not fulfill a winning criterion, the player may buy a predetermined number of new balls if he deems it interesting. Or else, the player may stop his play and start a new one, using either the same bingo card or a different one. If the player succeeds to fulfill a winning criterion with the new drawn designations in addition to the first-draw designations, he is awarded a prize. This latter prize value can be based on another pay schedule, or even include different winning criteria. In consequence, a multiple-step game is provided wherein the player may end his play when he deems it appropriate.
- (0027) A characteristic bingo game of the present invention is to identify the prize value in a peculiar way. Typically, a winning criterion (or winning pattern) is associated with a predetermined prize value. However, due to the game volatility decreasing as the number of used designations decreases, the prize value may differ if the winning pattern is reached within the first seven (7) designations drawn rather than with the tenth (10th) designation. The algorithm used to calculate the prize value may be based on the last participating designations, the order of said last participating designation, the draw order of all the designations participating in said win, or whatever criteria a game designer may judge suitable.

(0028) Accordingly, while the invention has been described in connection with the specific embodiment thereof and the disclosed alternatives, it will be understood that modifications are available. It is the intent to cover any variations, uses, or adaptations of the invention following, in general, the principles of the invention. Such covered applications will find their essential features herein set forth in the scope of the appended claims.